

PARALLELISM, CONVERGENCE,
AND INFLUENCE IN THE RELATIONS
OF ARAB AND BYZANTINE
PHILOSOPHY, LITERATURE,
AND PIETY

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LIKE Guzmán de Alfarache I should have liked nothing better than to enter directly into my "Discourse; yet I felt constrained to eschew the criticism of some *Sophist* or other, who would have been apt to have accused me of not proceeding à *Definitione ad Definitum*, from the *Definition* to the *Thing Defined*";¹ and this with better reason than the Spanish rogue who merely fears a charge of incompleteness were he to omit an account of his parentage, while I have to explain my use of the key concept of this study, taking, as I must, the term "relations" in a sense not immediately and necessarily associated with it by the English, or in fact, by any Western hearer.

Relations, that is, cultural relations outside of art, to become a meaningful subject of historical investigation, must be consciously maintained; at the very least, a somnolent and uneasy awareness must subsist that there obtains a connection, be it by origin, influence, or interchange, sought or unsought, in any event sufficient to establish a significant similarity or contrast between the entities bracketed together by their postulated relatedness. To Arabs and Byzantines the realization of such relatedness was foreign, a certain number of deliberate borrowings notwithstanding. Their contacts, resulting more often than not in the kinship of a tenacious hostility, were not understood for their cultural creativeness. The developmental similarities, which, paradoxically enough, increased as direct political and intellectual connections lessened, were not perceived. The proud illusion of self-sufficiency persisted undented by the knowledge of, on occasion, solicited loans; each culture surrounded its bearers with an experientially adequate and seemingly complete body of intellectual resources somewhat as, for example, English, French, or German literature and scholarship provide their respective publics with subjectively adequate and complete descriptive statements of their universes. The difference, however, lies in the fact that even the monolingual Occidental of today has been alerted to the illusory character of this autarchy and senses that his life is part of a complementary dramatic exchange, while Arab and Byzantine, or rather the Muslim of the Arabicized world and the Greek-speaking Christian of the Byzantine Empire, recognized kinship only in terms of the other's error and distortion of pristine truth and (on the Muslim side) in the common recourse to an esoteric philosophical tradition.

Purpose and meaning of a study such as ours can therefore only be analytical reconstruction, *kashf al-ghitā'*, the "lifting of the veil," and not the retracing of experience and judgment of either Arab or Byzantine, protected as both were from a full view of contemporary realities by the language curtain and, more importantly, by an almost exclusive concern for themselves with a corresponding indifference to the other's ways—whenever these were not apt to lead to political complications (which is why the alien religion comes in for a great deal of heated and a bit of informed discussion). The sharing of

¹ Mateo Alemán, *Guzmán d'Alfarache*, English translation (London, 1707-1708), I, 1-2.

folk tale themes and the similarity of the atmosphere which has become condensed in the *Digenes* epic, on the one hand, and in narratives such as 'Umar b. an-Nu'mān in the *Arabian Nights* corpus or the *Sayyid Battāl*, on the other—of less weight, incidentally in the Muslim than in the Byzantine intellectual *oikonomia*—are not to be mistaken for indications of developments affecting the culture consciousness of one or both of the antagonists. What common points of reference there were, or could have been but for mechanical barriers and deliberate blindness, were located in the religious structure, the motifs that underlay it, the questions they posed, the methods that appeared suitable in attacking them, and the solutions by which the seeker would acquiesce. Hence common ground would extend from theology into philosophy and into science insofar as speculation remained a tool more appropriate than observation, authority tended to buttress communal safety at the expense of self-reliance, and the physically and historically impossible continued to be confused with the logically absurd.

The cleavage between Byzantium and the Arabs, to retain the conveniently inadequate terms, in philosophy and literature (and beyond) is due essentially to the different principles of selection applied to the classical heritage. Byzantine authors may not have done as Greek writers did; but Greek literature was always there, at least *in potentia*, to counterbalance the Fathers and the monks, themselves only rarely completely free of its touch, and the Platonic tradition was ever present under the surface; and with the two was the preparedness to conceive of an intellectual and ethical universe in which man was, if not the measure, at any rate the focus of things—an outlook which on the Muslim side was episodic and confined to conventicles. The relations between the two culture worlds are further determined by the fact that into the eleventh century such convergences as occurred or were adumbrated were the work of the educated, and more particularly of an Islamic *Bildungsschicht* which existed side by side with the true carriers of the Muslim tradition, the architects and spokesmen of the *umma Muḥammadiyya* as a socio-political body.² After ca. 1050 or 1100, however, it is on the popular level that convergences come to the fore. The disintegration of the "standard cultures" (and of the supporting political structures) not only leads to a change in the dominant *Bildungsschichten*, but above all to an integration of elements of popular feeling and popular modes of thought, religious and aesthetic as well as more specifically "scientific," into the new "standard syntheses" of theology and literary taste, not to mention the convergences which popular strains common to the Near East, regardless of the religious and linguistic dominants of the moment, bring about on attaining by default, as it were, scope and relative independence upon the breakup of the erstwhile controlling intellectual superstructures.

Yielding to man's inveterate addiction to the triad, one might confront

² The parallelism deserves to be noted which endows both Baghdad and Byzantium with a class of educated laymen that, on occasion, developed into the carriers of a secular, potentially humanist culture. The West had to wait until the fourteenth century for the development of a comparable stratum.

Islamic civilization, as grown from the specifically Muslim component, "Arabism," and the local traditions encountered on expansion, with Byzantine as analyzable into a Christian component, "Hellenism" (in which the fading Roman-Latin heritage may be included), and again the local traditions of the dominated areas. A Hellenic or Hellenistic element must be discerned, more or less concealed, in what is here designated as the "local traditions" of Syria or Egypt but also of Mesopotamia and Iran, and even, although in attenuated density, of Arabia proper; a Hellenic element, too, is present in both the Muslim and the Christian messages as these had been articulated by their followers. The "Hellenistic" substratum is thus pervasive far beyond the immediately recognizable; besides, there is accessible a store of Greek scientific information, intellectual approaches and techniques, with models of application to alien ideas as manifested in earlier revelations, and dehydrated patterns of self-expression, ready for revival through new contents.

Though profoundly modified through a novel experience of the holy and through Arabization of tenets and phrasing, the Islamic doctrinal impulse, in its resumption of religious motifs which previously had inspired Christian teaching, harbored the same intellectual difficulties which recourse to Greek philosophy had assisted the Fathers in pinpointing and, in terms of the sensibilities of the times, resolving. What had been a *skandalon* to the pagan of Greece and Rome, resurged as problem in a world turning Muslim—the creation of the world in time, the resurrection of the flesh, the ethical *aporia* of a God who punishes the evil actions he decrees. But after centuries of Christian debate the shock of the antinomies had worn off and the Muslim community found it easier to become reconciled to the intellectually unpalatable, to Aristotelianizing its teachings (as did the Jews and Zoroastrians of the period), and to acquiesce in an emotionally satisfactory abdication of inquiry into the unfathomable Other. The philosophers, however, whose unrest was not to be stilled by the prejudgment of revelation, and not a few among their theological opponents (like their companions of Greek, Latin, and Jewish scholasticism) gave themselves over to the erection of *cathédrales d'idées* (to use L. Febvre's expression).

Irrelevant to any mastery of the outside world, on which Muslim and Byzantine had but a precarious hold, these scaffoldings of speculations, disciplined and given a semblance of realism by a rigorous formal logic, were intended to glorify God by throwing a protective wall around religious doctrine. The freedom of esoteric groups of *falāsifa* in Islam, as of the uncommitted superficiality of a Psellos, left untouched the basic otherworldliness with its concomitant, the acquiescence in approximate knowledge of reality, and the susceptibility to fears and, in general, the low threshold of collective excitability this in turn entailed.

The use of reason was indicated to prevent its reaching out into zones where reason would endanger the relation between the community and its Lord, for truth and error were more than intellectual positions (with ethical implications); their adoption sacralized or desecrated the community. In this regard, the

cultivation of Hellenic philosophy was more dangerous to the Byzantine than to the Muslim—to him its deprecation meant more of a self-denial and a refusal to accept himself in his heritage. Is it not significant that John Italos was reproached for “following the Greek philosophers instead of merely reading them as a part of education”?³ And Psellos is careful to point out that the very existence of God posits that of philosophy—if there is God, there must be Providence; if there is Providence, there must be *sophia* (by which God foresees); if there is *sophia*, there must be the desire for it, which is precisely what *philosophia* is.⁴ Other than the Muslim *failasūf*, a Psellos could, on the model of the Fathers, consider the Greek thinkers precursors of Christianity; no comparable avenue was open to an Avicenna or an Averroes; once rehabilitated in principle, inasmuch as they adumbrated the perfect teachings of Christianity, Aristotle and Plato could be used as a bridge to that antiquity which never lost its power to tempt—provided of course Scripture and Fathers were kept at hand to point the way where the ancients had stumbled.

The relation to antiquity determined in Byzantium and in Arab Islam (but not in Latin Christendom) the outlook on the sciences, or rather, the range of education and human concern for knowledge as revealed in the classification of the sciences. As categories, but not in terms of their content, the Byzantine *dogmata ta theia* or *logoi kath' hemas* and *logoi hoi thyrathen* or *mathemata ta ektos* correspond to the *'ulūm al-'Arab* and the *'ulūm al-'ajam* (or *al-awā'il*) respectively. The *'ulūm al-'Arab* are, functionally, the sciences required to preserve the Muslim community and, genetically, the sciences developed to comprehend Revelation and Tradition (by explication and interpretation) and carry on the Arab heritage; the *'ulūm al-awā'il*, on the other hand, embrace the contribution of antiquity, with the propaedeutic or methodological sciences maintaining a somewhat uncertain position within or apart. The hard core is furnished by the Arab sciences among which those dealing with language are basic from a practical point of view. For, as in Byzantium, the world of learning (and literature proper) is set apart from everyday life by a linguistic differentiation which increasingly separates “standard” language and vernacular. As already indicated—and it is here that the Arab and the Byzantine outlooks are at variance—the Arab sciences include the religious such as *tafsīr* and *fiqh*; and the identification of “basic” higher education as an *egkyklios paideia* more or less identical with *hoi thyrathen logoi* is in complete contrast with Muslim ideas where at no point could philosophy or physical science have been considered part of a “standard” curriculum.⁵ The integration of literature in this program is a feature shared by both civilizations; in fact, however, it tended to set the types of education even further apart, seeing the abyss that separates Homer from pre-Islamic poetry. Similarities in taste will be noticeable to us—such as the common addiction to description which among the Arabs

³ G. Buckler, *Anna Comnena. A Study* (London, 1929), p. 322. The text of the article which condemns this attitude to “Hellenic studies” in general terms (first in 1076/77 and again in 1082) is translated in P. E. Stephanou, *Jean Italos. Philosophe et humaniste* (Rome, 1949), p. 48.

⁴ B. Tatakis, *La philosophie byzantine* (Paris, 1949), p. 206.

⁵ Cf., e.g., Buckler, *op. cit.*, pp. 180–181.

is in evidence primarily in poetry, among the Byzantines, in prose, and which goes back in technique and spirit to the *ekphrasis* of Late Antiquity—but will not bridge the gulf between the ideals guiding the educational process. The moral purpose of education was realized on both sides. Psellos' dictum that (theological) study will perfect the soul and help it to return to the highest good⁶ has its parallel in the saying of his contemporary, Ibn Ḥazm, that identifies the rank of a science with its ability to draw man near to his Creator.⁷ A "secularized" appraisal of the educative process (rather than of education) inspired the endeavors of the *falāsifa* and their sympathisers from Kindī, who realizes that the search for truth ennobles and honors him who undertakes it,⁸ to Miskawaih, who views ethics as the noblest of sciences because it aspires to improve the actions of man.⁹

A less programmatic and hence more revealing confrontation of individual and society we should expect from belles-lettres; and this not alone on the strength of the modern tradition. But where, despite reticence, inarticulateness, or adherence to genre convention, we do find the Arab or the Byzantine writer facing experience through description and introspection, it is similarities rather than influences that we are able to observe. A certain preference of the Byzantine for prose, over against the dominance of verse in Arab literature, may deserve notice, as do exclusions not imposed or warranted by the available heritage. The refusal to admit secondary causes and the ultimate irrelevance of human decision and consequently human conflict will account in some measure for the failure of Arab (or, in this context, rather of Sunnite) Islam to develop a drama. The shying away from the dramatic mode shows in the refusal, if this formulation be permitted, to develop the *munāzara*, the *Rangstreitgedicht*, increasingly popular in Arabic since the ninth century, into full-fledged scenes or theatrical sketches, as was done in Italy from the thirteenth century in the so-called *contrasti*. No explanation of this religious-psychological order would, however, fit the Byzantine scene, and it is difficult to explain why the cento of the *Christos paschon*, a moderately successful *tour de force* datable to the eleventh or twelfth century and spiritually akin, yet inferior in its lifelessness, to the Jesuit school drama of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was, together with the so-called *Cyprus Passion Cycle* of 1260–1270 (and apart from the continuation beyond the fall of Constantinople of the mime), to remain the only fully tangible attempt to resume or imitate one of the known achievements of the Hellenic past.¹⁰

⁶ Tatakis, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

⁷ *Kitāb al-akhlāq wa's-siyar*, ed. and trans. by N. Tomiche (Beirut, 1961), no. 39.

⁸ R. Walzer, *Greek Into Arabic* (Oxford, 1962), p. 12.

⁹ Miskawaih, *Kitāb tahdhīb al-akhlāq* (Cairo, 1329), p. 43; quoted by M. Arkoun, Deux épîtres de Miskawayh, *Bulletin d'études orientales*, XVII (1961–1962), 7–73, at p. 8. M.-D. Chenu, *La théologie comme science au XIII^e siècle*, 3rd ed. (Paris, 1957), pp. 18–19, has brought together a number of Carolingian quotations which show that, in the West, too, grammar and rhetoric were the first sciences to be applied to the sacred text. Their language, incidentally, like that of the Koran, was held superior to any rules established by grammar.

¹⁰ Cf. E. Wagner, *Die arabische Rangstreitdichtung und ihre Einordnung in die allgemeine Literaturgeschichte*, Akad. d. Wiss. u. d. Lit. (Mainz), Abh. d. geistes- u. sozialwiss. Kl. (1962), No. 8, pp. 31–32. The literature on the Byzantine theater is most conveniently accessible in A. C. Mahr, *The Cyprus*

Neither in Islam nor in Greek Christendom did the depreciation of this life lead to indifference to the events which direct and fulfill it. In both milieus there flourished, independent of political success or calamity, a historiography of wide scope, more often than not anxiously clinging to the simple scaffolding of annalistic chronology and almost always oriented toward the personalization (but not the psychological analysis) of happenings, with the Byzantines holding the edge in sharp (or at least rhetorically unimpeachable and impressive) portraiture of the protagonists, but the Muslims outdistancing them in the development of collective self-representation through biographies whose copiousness, variety, and accuracy have no rival down to very modern times, and which constitute a matchless dossier of the "Islamic" personality (as much of it, that is, as seemed appropriate to record and exhibit) and its typology. More often than not we have to be content with basic data and a string of anecdotes; intellectual achievement is apt to be described in terms of books audited and transmitted and of centers of learning visited; the profile of the biographee, if it can be reconstructed at all, must be traced by us: there is no sense of unity and development of the person and hardly any expressed awareness of his relation to his society; yet the wealth of material is overwhelming and what may be impossible to accomplish for the individual scholar, saint, or statesman, becomes possible for the type or the period—to recompose the mental and behavioral structures insofar as they mattered to the contemporaries.

Autobiography is more evenly represented and it is remarkable that in the self-confrontation of the individual the Latin West, far behind in historiography and biography proper, by 1100 reached the level of Byzantines and Arabs. The autobiographical scheme where the path of the writer in search of truth and God is traced from school to school to final conversion or illumination, and which can be followed back beyond Saint Augustine at least to Saint Justin Martyr and to Lucian, does not seem to have been utilized in Byzantium; on the other hand, it is surprising to see Michael VIII Palaeologos (1261–1282) employ in his autobiographical sketch a technique barely prefigured in antiquity and only much later taken up in Islam, viz. the presentation of the writer's accomplishments and successful actions as benefactions from God (*Gnadengaben, minan*), whereby the most reckless self-glorification will be justified as a manner of rendering thanks to the Lord for the favors He bestowed on the writer. While the attitude may be noted earlier, the first Arab author to base his autobiography on the alleged divine command to make public the evidences of divine grace is ash-Sha'rānī (d. 1565).¹¹

Passion Cycle (Notre Dame, Ind., 1947). Mahr gives an edition, translation, and analytical discussion of the Passion Plays. Reference may also be made to the recent study by G. La Piana, "The Byzantine Iconography of the Presentation of the Virgin Mary to the Temple and a Latin Religious Pageant," *Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of A. M. Friend, Jr.*, ed. by K. Weitzmann (Princeton, 1955), pp. 261–271.

¹¹ *Laṭā'if al-minan* (various printings); on this work, cf. F. Rosenthal, "Die arabische Autobiographie," *Studia Arabica*, I (Rome, 1937), pp. 1–40, at pp. 37–40. The *Laṭā'if al-minan fī manāqib Abī 'l-'Abbās al-Mursī wa-shaikhī-hi Abī 'l-Ḥasan* by Aḥmad b. 'Aṭā' Allāh al-Iskandarī (d. 1309), from which Sha'rānī may have adapted the title of his autobiography, does not organize its bio-

Since the twelfth century the influx of Eastern literary motifs into the Byzantine novel—not compensated at the time by a corresponding reflux of Byzantine motifs into Arab narrative—does not constitute a helpful analogy. Nor does the structural correspondence between Abū 'l-'Alā' al-Ma'arri's (d. 1058) *Visit to Paradise*, with its discussion of Arab literature, the so-called *Risālat al-ghufrān*, and the *Timarion* (middle of twelfth century) help, as both may be derived from a pattern of which Lucian's *Nekyiomanteia* is the best known and most influential representative. (It is perhaps appropriate to note the structural looseness, so typical of Arab literature, of the *Risālat al-ghufrān* in contrast to the strict composition of even as casual and topical a work as the *Timarion*.)¹²

It would seem that revivals within a cultural development, whatever their causes, occasions, and effects, are carried by an increased confidence in man's

graphical materials as *minan* accorded by God to the saints with whom it is concerned. (The book is printed on the margin of Sha'rānī's *Laṭā'if* [Cairo, 1321/1903], accompanying I, 2, to II, 88.)

The latest edition (and translation) of Michael's autobiography is by H. Grégoire, "Imperatoris Michaeli Palaeologi *De Vita sua*," *Byzantion*, XXIX-XXX (1959-1960), pp. 447-476; decisive are chaps. i-xi. Grégoire and before him D. J. Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West. 1258-1282. A Study in Byzantine-Latin Relations* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), p. 16, note 1, accept the authorship of Michael. The "autobiography" actually is a *typikon*, or monastic rule, for the convent of St. Demetrios in Constantinople, in whose first part the emperor rehearses his life and deeds. G. Misch, *Geschichte der Autobiographie* (Bern-Frankfurt a. Main, 1949ff.), III/ii, pp. 752-755, touches upon the apologetic character of the work but makes no reference to the stylistic pattern it represents. A certain kinship exists between Michael's organization of the major factors and events of his life in terms of God's benefactions to him and Libanios' presentation of much of his autobiography in terms of the favors and hurts prepared for him by his Tyche; see his famous oration on his Life Βίος ἡ περὶ τῆς ἁλουτοῦ τύχης (*Opera*, ed. by R. Foerster [Leipzig, 1903, 1922], I, pp. 79-206). Libanios' self-statement is less stringently organized than the much briefer narrative of Michael's; not all of his experiences are presented from the guiding viewpoint; while at times he endeavors to show how his Tyche balanced the good and the bad, Libanios is on the whole inclined to portray her as benevolent and his life as fortunate. A phrase like that in chap. 146, where he justifies mention of an incident by the desire not to pass over any of her gifts, or at the beginning of chap. 259, where he wishes the *eunoia* of the gods recognized in what he has to report about himself, is fairly close to the attitude which Michael's *bios* bespeaks. Libanios (who wrote the major part of his autobiographical oration in 374, adding to it in 390) was read in the schools throughout the Byzantine period. One has the impression that a good deal of interest was devoted to his writings from the time of Kinnamos (d. after 1185), who patterned his *Ethopoia* after one of Libanios', to the first half of the fourteenth century, during which period Thomas Magistros (under Andronikos II, 1282-1328), Georgios Lekapenos, and Andreas Lopadiotes made use of his works in various ways, and even as late as the beginning of the fifteenth when Manuel II's (1391-1425) dialogue on marriage appears to reflect the ancient rhetor's Θέσις ἐὶ γαμήτειον (cf. K. Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur*, 2nd ed. [Munich, 1897], pp. 455, 491, 549, 558, and 576; R. R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries* [Cambridge, 1954], pp. 49, 84, and 399). The possibility that Michael was acquainted with Libanios is undeniable. The freedom, not to say the originality, with which Libanios' scheme is used suggests, however, the existence of some intermediary link or links. A competent analysis of Libanios' *Bios* is to be found in K. Malzacher, *Die Tyche bei Libanios*, diss. Strasbourg (Strasbourg, 1918), pp. 53-60; cf. also Misch, *op. cit.*, I, 566-575. (The author wishes to thank Mr. Michael Crosby of the Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies for suggesting the possibility of a connection between the *Bios* of Libanios and Michael VIII.) A faint prefiguration of *minan* as providing the skeletal structure of autobiographical statements may perhaps be found in Paulinus' of Pella (the son-in-law of Ausonius) *Eucharisticos* and Prosper's of Aquitaine (ca. 390-ca. 463) *Poema coniugis ad uxorem* and *Carmen de providentia divina* (MPL, LI, pp. 611-615, and *ibid.*, 617-638; authorship doubtful). Cf. E. M. Sanford, *Salvianus: On the Government of God* (New York, 1930), Introduction, p. 26.

¹² F. Masai, *Pléthon et le platonisme de Mistra* (Paris, 1956), pp. 288-292, offers an interpretation of the *Timarion* in terms of the intellectual currents to which it lends expression. The *Risālat al-ghufrān* can be examined in the rather uninspired (and abridged) French version of M.-S. Meïssa, *Le message du pardon d'Abou l'Ala de Maarra* (Paris, 1932), and the likewise not altogether satisfactory English translation by G. Brackenbury, *The Epistle of Forgiveness* (Cairo, 1943).

worth and strength, a refinement of introspection, and an extension of the ability to express hitherto muted contents; whenever possible recourse is had to identification with a past model; and in the West, or rather, the Mediterranean world and its cultural descendants, every revival down to the seventeenth century has occurred under the sign of Plato. In most cases this Plato was more a Porphyry or a Proklus, who came to supplant or at least to supplement an Aristotle, himself apprehended through neo-Platonic eyes. To pre-modern man, truth is total; it is the opposite of falsehood, error, absurdity. Hence the problem in Latin and in Greek Christendom as well as in Islam has been to reconcile the total truths of Aristotle and Plato and the total truth of either with the (by definition) overriding truth of Revelation. Psellos and Anna Comnena see Aristotle as a preliminary to Plato. The true philosopher must have passed the threshold of Aristotelian learning.¹³ Muslim thinkers like Fārābī (d. 950) devoted themselves to demonstrating that there was no contradiction between the teachings of the two masters. In case of conflict, the philosopher had to yield to Scripture unless it could be shown—often to the philosopher's but rarely the theologian's satisfaction—that the disparate doctrines marked different levels of truth or truth phrased for different levels of understanding. A certain antirationalism, an inclination toward mystical intuition, congenial as it is in some measure to the Platonic world view, was thus of necessity built into every new outreach toward a philosophical, i.e., reason-based concept of the universe, God, man, and their necessary relationships.

Psellos' insistence that there is a mode of perception that is above reason, in that it accedes to areas where reason, tied as it is to causal argument from known premises, cannot operate, is in harmony with his Platonism, seeing that Plato himself went beyond reasoning and demonstration to the realization of the One. The placing of Plato as a forerunner of Christianity, and the unqualified readiness to accept Revelation, albeit in a form compatible with a philosophical frame of reference, did not protect Psellos from being attacked for Hellenism, any more than submission to prophecy protected the *failasūf* from suspicion of *kufṛ*, a suspicion which was perhaps founded less on the individual tenets he might defend than on the admission of authorities alien to the Muslim Revelation and the further admission, open or concealed, of human reason as the touchstone of truth. Psellos observed approvingly that Aristotle always proceeded by syllogism and did not argue from myths as the ancient Egyptians had done. His reasoning is *anthropikoteron*, i.e., more after the manner appropriate to man, who ought to attain to truth on his own resources by logical means.¹⁴

¹³ Cf. Buckler, *op. cit.*, p. 172. In the West, as Chenu, *op. cit.*, pp. 105–106, has pointed out, Augustinianism is another indispensable element in any "renaissance." Its essential constituents Chenu describes as "sens de l'intériorité, l'appétit de la béatitude, la foi en la souveraineté absolue de la grâce, la primauté d'une anthropologie surnaturelle sur toute physique, la perception réaliste de l'économie du salut à travers l'histoire et au delà des cycles du cosmos."

¹⁴ Cf. Tatakis, *op. cit.*, p. 171. With a time lag of almost two hundred years the Occident recognized the possibility and accepted the obligation of working toward progress in the search for scientific and

Abū Sulaimān the Logician (d. 1000), the teacher of Tauḥidī (d. 1023)—to my knowledge the only Muslim writer who expressly characterizes man as a problem¹⁵—recognizes the superiority of the prophet over the philosopher, but attempts, perhaps for that very reason, to deal with philosophy and religion as complementary though distinct areas of human endeavor. He objects to the attempt of the Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafā' to annex the religious law to philosophy. For "if one desires to philosophize one must turn away the glance from religious opinions [practices? *diyānāt*]; but if one wishes to give oneself over to the religious life [religious practice? *tadayyun*], one must free oneself from all philosophical concern."¹⁶ Yet philosophy and religion are tied to one another by sharing the same final cause. To attain the religious goal man must first carry rational investigation as far as possible; intellectual activity must precede contemplation. The reason which Abū Sulaimān—and with him Tauḥidī (who was, however, more conscious of the implications)—exhorts man to follow is clearly the universal property of humankind, difficult to distinguish from the *ḥikma khālida*, the eternal wisdom, to which Miskawaih, following Iranian trains of thought, devoted one of his works. Tauḥidī cannot resist deprecating the limitative ethics of the Muslim *fuqahā'*, based though they are (albeit at two removes) on revelation, in favor of the common experience of man regardless of creed or race.¹⁷ Such an attitude could hardly survive in a period when salvaging and revitalizing of Sunnism came to be identified as the true task of the community, which, in the nature of things, could recognize itself only in the (historically speaking) accidental, the distinctively particular.

The upsurge of anthropocentric thought, paralleled by an aspiration to substantive originality in literature, collapsed—in philosophy sooner than in

philosophical truth after the manner of Rāzī (d. 925 or 935) and the Byzantine Renaissance. Less quoted than Bernard of Chartres (d. ca. 1130) is his contemporary Gilbert of Tournai, who declares truth to be open to all; it cannot however be found if we are content with what the predecessors have established; those who came before us are not our masters but our guides; complete truth has not yet been acquired. It is remarkable that the anti-intellectual tendencies of Islamic and Byzantine thought from the eleventh and twelfth centuries on are paralleled, again with a characteristic time lag, for example, in the outlook of a Duns Scotus (1266–1308), a Richard Fitzralph (middle of the fourteenth century), a Jean Gerson (1362–1428) and a Nicolaus of Cues (1401–1464).

¹⁵ Tauḥidī and Miskawaih, *Kitāb al-hawāmīl wa'sh-shawāmīl*, ed. by A. Amin (Cairo, 1951), p. 180, line 5 (*quaestio* 68); cf. M. Arkoun, "L'Humanisme arabe au IV^e/X^e siècle," *Studia Islamica*, XIV (1961), pp. 73–108; XV (1961), pp. 63–87, at XIV, p. 98.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, XIV, pp. 89–90, with reference to Tauḥidī, *Kitāb al-imtā' wa'l-mu'ānasa*, ed. by A. Amin and A. Saqr (Cairo, 1939–1944), II, p. 18.

¹⁷ Arkoun, *op. cit.*, XIV, p. 97, note 1, with reference to *Hawāmīl*, p. 329. Methodologically close to the Hellenistic gnosis is the use made by Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl (executed 1191) of the idea of Eternal Wisdom as an unbroken chain of mystical tradition carried by Hermes, Aristotle and Plato, Agathodaimon and Empedocles, as well as Indian and Persian sages; access to the literature is most easily obtained through G.-C. Anawati and L. Gardet, *Mystique musulmane* (Paris, 1961), p. 56. With much more vigor and consistency did Plethon draw the conclusions from the doctrine of the *philosophia perennis* which led him to the rejection of the revealed religions in favor of that wisdom which was guaranteed by the common consent of mankind and first preached by Zoroaster to Medes, Persians, and most of the ancient peoples of Asia. The *koinai ennoiai* of humanity constitute the supreme verities; their moral content is binding for all times. In this context the virtue of the intellect emerges as the highest, and the cultivation of the sciences, such as history, geography, philosophy, as a duty (cf. Masai, *op. cit.*, pp. 130–139 and 263–264). Petrarch's *De sui ipsius et aliorum Ignorantia* anticipated not the concept of the *ḥikma khālida*, but the preoccupation with man that underlies it.

literature—under the weight of the overwhelming urge to safeguard Sunni Islam. Barred from easy recourse to the Greeks and tied in its belles-lettres to a classical age inadequate in thematic scope and degree of sophistication to the existential needs of the day, the incipient, bold, yet never fully stated “humanism” of Baghdad had already vanished when Psellos became *hypatos ton philosophon*; it was an early victim of the socio-political regrouping and the intellectual redefining of the *umma Muḥammadiyya*, which in the second half of the eleventh century was to give Islam its “definitive” face for hundreds of years. To rehabilitate a humanistic philosophy as a prefiguration of Islam and represent the Greek thinkers as Muslims *avant la lettre* (as, *mutatis mutandis*, the Fathers had done and Psellos did once more) was clearly not possible. Allegoresis, the favorite tool of the Christian, would not serve the Sunni. The Fatimid Shī‘ī would be able to buttress his religious emanationism by means of an ontological emanationism of Hellenistic origin. But was it not precisely this deviation of the radical Shī‘a that the lawyer-theologians and statesmen of the eleventh century knew to be a mortal peril to the True Believers?

The relationship between political and cultural flowering does not appear to be constant. French classicism coincided with an upsurge of French power, Greek tragedy ebbed with the waning of Athenian might, but philosophy survived the corrosion of the city. In general one is left with the impression that continuing political weakness, if accompanied by that insignificance of community concerns which tends to follow relegation to the sidelines, is detrimental to cultural creativeness, but that political disintegration as such, with the concomitant relaxing of public control over the intellect and, on occasion, the need to enlist the intellect in the preparation of a political renaissance, will be favorable to an outburst of productivity and a sudden switching to new approaches and experimenting with new aspirations.^{17a}

The developments in Eastern Arab Islam and in the Byzantine Empire during the tenth century are cases in point, illustrating the creative force which may be released when there is no longer any surveillance by a prestigious tradition with which the state had become identified. Despite his position as the (nominal) head of the state, Constantine Porphyrogenetos (913–959) symbolizes better than any other personality the *rassemblement* of spiritual forces which succeeded, not without the ever-present regress to antiquity, in liberating Byzantium from the monopolistic pressure of the monastic movement on its intellectual life. The reorganization of a university, the

^{17a} What the philosopher J. G. Fichte (d. 1814) noted with regard to Germany could readily be transferred to the Muslim domain. “No German-born prince ever took upon himself to mark out for his subjects as their fatherland . . . the territory over which he ruled, and to regard his subjects as bound to the soil. A truth not permitted to find expression in one place might find expression in another, where it might happen that those truths were forbidden which were permitted in the first. So, in spite of the many instances of onesidedness and narrowness of heart in the separate states, there was nevertheless in Germany, considered as a whole, the greatest freedom of investigation and publication that any people has ever possessed.” (*Addresses to the German Nation* [1808], trans. by R. F. Jones and G. H. Turnbull [Chicago-London, 1922], p. 148 [Address viii].)

recapturing of Platonism, the readmittance of realism in art,¹⁸ as well as the deepening of mystical piety manifest in Symeon the New Theologian—these are symptoms of the reconquest of an intellectual level which had long been out of reach and which was achieved against a background of provincial magnates whittling away at the imperial power, the Slavs and later the Seljuqs and Normans threatening the core areas of the Empire, and Venice establishing its economic stranglehold on the Byzantine state. Similarly, with the caliphate becoming the helpless and dishonored prize of fractional wars; regional principalities, shortlived for the most part, carving up the Muslim domain; non-Arab rulers establishing themselves in most of the Arabic-speaking territories; and the twin insecurity of financial decay and internal violence becoming a normal part of life, the first summation of Muslim knowledge is achieved by the Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafā', a Fārābī blends Greek and Islamic political thought, the greatest of the (non-classical) poets is showered with patronage, new ideas in theology as well as poetry, criticism, and *Lebensgestaltung* are arduously debated; there is a great deal of philosophical experimentation, different types of the religious life are locked in vehement combat; the cultural scene is as motley as the political, sects and denominations mingle and fight, and for the first time perhaps in the history of Islamic civilization the taboo against the popular is disregarded.

Al-Jahshiyārī (d. 942) collects the basic corpus of the *Arabian Nights*, Abū Dulaf (d. after 942) describes half-seriously the ways of the underworld with a generous use of *argot*, and Muḥammad al-Azdī (also tenth century)¹⁹ portrays the Baghdādī through his own idiom (it is true that he had, to some extent, a precedent in Jāhiz' fine ear for regional and social differentiations of speech). With all this the upper-class—hence, in a sense, exclusive—character of Arab *Bildung* persists. The realistic interest in the popular subsides, and the Hellenism of scholastic method and philosophical thought, congenial in particular to the sects, maintains that unreflected kinship of outlook of the Arab and Byzantine intelligentsia. Their not infrequent contacts are seriously curtailed only when, after Mantzikert (1071), the Seljuqs interpose their state between the Arabic and the Greek speaking areas. The Seljuq victory, in whose wake the de-Hellenization of Eastern and Central Asia Minor is to begin in earnest, occurs at a time when the consolidation of Sunni Islam is successfully taking shape. Culturally speaking, the essential features of this reaffirmation of orthodoxy are the integration of mystical piety and the acceptance of popular

¹⁸ The term "realism," which to some may seem ill chosen as an epithet of any phase of Byzantine art, is to be understood as a name for a movement which allowed the resumption of an ancient interest in nature motifs and picturesque detail as well as the loosening of ecclesiastical control over the treatment of traditional themes and the rendering of the human countenance. A. Grabar, *Byzantine Painting* (New York, 1953), speaks of "leanings toward realism" (p. 44) and a tendency "to interpolate realistic motifs and picturesque variations of the time-honored formulas" (p. 138). The realism here noted is, of course, no kin to P. A. Michelis' "transcendental realism" (*An Aesthetic Approach to Byzantine Art* [London, 1955], p. 178); but a reminder of the combination, peculiar to Byzantine hagiography, of "realism and spirituality" (which Michelis describes on p. 114) may not be out of place in our context.

¹⁹ On him, cf. C. Brockelmann, *GAL*, I, p. 156; Suppl., I, p. 254; and F. Gabrieli, "Sulla *Ḥikāyat Abī l-Qāsim* di Abū l-Muṭahhar al-Azdī," *RSO*, XX (1942), pp. 33-45.

practices as part of "official" religion; a concentration on law and theology with a consequent retrenchment of public concern for the "foreign sciences"; a heightened awareness of the importance of tradition as justification for and the mortar of the attempted synthesis; wider scope for individual religiosity, which tends to organize in fraternities; a personalization of the experience of the holy, which is obtained through the saint recognized by his miracles; and, with all this, a lowering of critical demands, a depreciation of human reason in a voluptuous relaxation into God's inscrutable omnipotence. The borders between the possible and the impossible, the natural and the supernatural are allowed to blur almost to extinction, while religious practice aims at collective self-intoxication with a trance-like, strangely sentimental "loss of self" into the Deity. In brief, the tide has turned against the intellect which is prized only as a regulatory tool for legal organization and theological codification, leading to a conspicuous advance in logical method and logical order as applied to theological reasoning²⁰—and the stage has been set for a resurgence of the "popular" into the *Bildungswelt*.

To avoid misunderstandings: popular motifs had always been allowed to penetrate into areas where they did not seem to endanger the total structure. Eschatology, where unsifted traditions from many sources had from the earliest times been admitted, is a case in point. So are Bedouin tales and the sailors' yarns grouped about Sinbād, or again the sailors' songs to which Ja'far invites Hārūn ar-Rashīd to listen in order to relieve his gloomy mood. But standard theology and standard literature (and in particular, poetry as its most highly valued sector) refused permeation by popular motifs and popular language, or assimilation to the vernacular in thinking and phrasing. The fights between Mu'tazila and "orthodoxy," the Ḥanbalites and their theological opponents, made concrete to the masses by the "uncreate Koran" and the "anthropomorphic" representation of the deity, both, if in varying degree, irksome to the intelligentsia and the theologian sensitized to philosophy, clearly exhibit as one of their aspects the conflict between the popular and the "educated" experience of the Muslim God. The literalism of the masses and their need for a comprehensible and, as it were, tangible deity, championed by the Ḥanbalites and transposed by them into a refusal to modify God's self-statements in Revelation, lost out on the level of credal formulation but won in the Islam as it was actually lived, into which popular sentiment forced, moreover, the veneration of the Prophet, the cult of the saints and the toler-

²⁰ This advance in systematic theology is connected with the work of al-Ghazzālī. W. M. Watt, *Muslim Intellectual. A Study of al-Ghazali* (Edinburgh, 1962), pp. 120–123, has devoted a convincing section to the effect which the consistent utilization of syllogistic logic has had on al-Ghazzālī's presentation of essentially the same theological *topoi* that his teacher al-Juwainī (d. 1085) had discussed. The simultaneous relaxing of rational scrutiny of data and improving of the technical mastery of rational argument has its parallels elsewhere. Sir Thomas Browne exults, in 1635, in the humiliation of reason by insisting on the ultimate irrelevance of its findings, an attitude not too far removed from that of al-Ghazzālī: "Yet I do believe all this is true, which my Reason would persuade me to be false; and this I think no vulgar part of Faith, to believe a thing not only above but contrary to Reason, and against the Arguments of our proper Senses." *Religio medici*, ed. by G. Keynes (London, 1928), p. 15; quoted by P. Garai, "Le cartésianisme et le classicisme anglais," *Revue de littérature comparée*, XXXI (1957), pp. 373–387, at p. 387.

ation of a massive concept of sacredness or *baraka* as a religious source of strength and security tested and handed down by countless generations, pagan, Christian, and Islamicized.

Literature, however, appeared to be able to hold the fort against any opposition to the increasing alienation from life and language of the surrounding reality. The code of admissible forms stood unchallenged, the listing of motifs admissible into poetry maintained the deceptive rigidity of the social register. But the substance proved more flexible than the form. And even the form would suffer itself to be enriched when the Spanish fashion of strophic poetry—long since paralleled by popular song in the East—attracted the attention of Eastern *littérateurs* who wrote and collected *azjāl* and *muwashshahāt* and worked out their theory;²¹ popular narrative is once again taken note of (to be incorporated into that elastic receptacle, the *Arabian Nights*); even the Shadow Play arouses the interest of at least one intellectual, Ibn Dāniyāl (d. 1310?), who has left us the only specimen of the genre, almost three hundred years after the *khayāl* had first been mentioned by a Spanish writer.²² The truly popular novel of the type of the *Sīrat 'Antar* or the *Sīrat Baibars* or the tale of the Banū Hilāl enjoyed its golden age, but never achieved acceptance by the *Bildungsschicht*. On the borderline between religion and literature an increasing number of edifying tracts recording the deeds of the saints and the virtues of the Prophet is provided; and the sermon, which since the tenth century has become a genre by itself, takes on a popular tone, as witness the *mau'izāt* of Ibn al-Jauzī (d. 1200) with their generous sprinkling of suggestive love poetry and drastic descriptions of the Hereafter.

More significantly still, the *maqāma*, the narrated dramatic sketch in rhymed prose, the delight of the philologists and barely understandable without a commentary explaining its lexicological and grammatical finesses, its recondite allusions and chiselled structure, chooses popular themes or incidents as the skeleton for its exquisite verbalizations; stylized scenes from "real" life, urban and tribal, are portrayed, manners and mores which would never have been reflected in standard poetry are depicted or touched upon, objects much below the dignity of traditional literature are mentioned or discussed,²³ and the vulgar is kept at bay only by the *recherché* artistry of expression and by the superiority which the author maintains by means of the discreet humor in which the tale, delicate as a spider's web, is steeped. The greatest master of the *maqāma*, Ḥarīrī of Baṣra (d. 1122), is barely dead when a realistic trend, hardly separable from a plunge into popular taste, makes itself felt in Arab

²¹ Ibn Sanā al-Mulk (d. 1211), Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī (d. probably 1349). The use of *azjāl* in the vernacular for the expression of mystical piety by the Andalusian poet 'Alī ash-Shushtarī (d. in Egypt in 1269) is characteristic for the style of the times; on Shushtarī, cf. L. Massignon, "Recherches sur Shushtari, poète andalou enterré à Damiette," *Mélanges offerts à William Marçais* (Paris, 1950), pp. 251–276 (with further references).

²² Ibn Ḥazm, *Akhlāq*, no. 83; cf. the note of the editor, p. 30.

²³ Cf., e.g., Hamadānī, *Maqāmāt*, nos. 12 (*Zechprellerei*) and 22 (on which, see F. Gabrieli, "La *maqāma maḍīriyya* di al-Hamadhānī," Acc. Lincei, Cl. scienze morali, storiche e filologiche, *Rendiconti*, 8th Ser., IV/11–12 [1949], pp. 509–515); Ḥarīrī, *Maqāmāt*, nos. 40, 47, and 49.

painting. In fact, it is his very *maqāmāt* which for two centuries at least offer attractive subjects to the miniaturist.

It is difficult not to note the simultaneous trend toward realism in Byzantine art that makes itself felt from the late eleventh century on.²⁴ Although here and there influences may be posited—thus the Eastern Byzantine school of Edessa, Mardin, and Diyārbakir appears to have had its effect on ‘Irāqī book illustration of the thirteenth century²⁵—what parallelisms do exist are to be accounted for rather by popular modes of feeling and perception breaking through the cracking shell of the *Bildungstradition*. Decentralization, the victory of the provincial aristocracy, and the rise in the capital of artisans and merchants may have given an impulse to the vernacular (or rather, semi-vernacular) literature so characteristic of the era of the Komnenoi and their successors—the classicism of Anna Komnene notwithstanding. In itself, the “Platonic Renaissance” of a Psellos, who incidentally concerned himself with the proverbs of the people,²⁶ constituted a far from popular movement; even less did it encourage absorption of popular themes; but as cause and symptom of a loosening of an earlier tradition, this movement may be considered to be in a certain relationship to the advance of popular and foreign modes of expression. *Barlaam and Joasaph*, *Stephanites and Ichnelates*, the *Syntipas*, but also a tale like the *Ptocholeon* and, in a different manner, *Belthandros and Chrysantza* bespeak a growing community of taste throughout the Byzantine and the Arab Near East to which the *Bildungsschicht* reacted—the translators of Oriental novels were without exception writers of high education—but which was due to the ascendancy gained by an aesthetic sensibility essentially unrelated to the classical impulse in either Constantinople or Baghdad.

The development is even more tangible in the religious sphere, where, in addition, a correlation with the Latin West is noted. The focussing of piety on Muḥammad is paralleled by the focussing of piety on Jesus and the dominance gained in Islam by hope and love over fear in man’s relation to God recurs in Latin Christendom as does the channeling of the religious life into lay orders of various kinds. For the evolution of Muslim piety consists essentially in a shift of motivation from the *mysterium tremendum*, God’s majesty, to the *mysterium fascinosum*, God’s grace and loving kindness, or, in the terms favored by the Muslims themselves, from the Lord’s *jalāl* to his *jamāl*. The same shift accompanies the revival of enthusiastic piety in Byzantium toward the end of the tenth century and the growth of sacramental mysticism in late mediaeval Catholicism, precisely as it did later the rise of Hassidism among East European Jewry.

This shift in the religious mood conditions a reorientation of Muslim doctrinal thinking where, in the key problems of God’s essence and righteousness, the relation of finite man with the transcendental God replaces the integrity of the divine transcendence as the primary concern. In other words, man and

²⁴ Cf. H. W. Haussig, *Kulturgeschichte von Byzanz* (Stuttgart, 1959), p. 375.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 373.

²⁶ Cf. K. Krumbacher, *op. cit.*, p. 905.

his needs take the place of God and His statutes as the vantage point of theological reasoning.²⁷

The basis of this unconscious rapprochement of mood and thought in Islam and Greek Christendom is in the two faiths' concept of man. If one passes from Western Christianity to Greek Christianity and further to Islam, the fundamental outlook on man becomes increasingly optimistic. The man whom Roman (and Protestant) Christianity endeavors to save is corrupted by original sin; only through the mediation of God's self-sacrifice in Jesus is a possibility for reparation, for salvation, restored. The relation between God and man, congenitally sinful and deficient, is above all a legal one. The fulfillment of the law, man's justification before God, is his primary task. God may be apprehended through His love; but this love makes itself felt primarily by His departing from absolute justice. For sin to us is more than anything else a violation of the ordained relationship between God and man. Greek orthodox piety is much less penetrated by the implications of the Fall. Man is created after God's image; this *Ebenbildlichkeit* confers on him an inalienable nobility which sin may tarnish, distort, and diminish, but never completely remove. Sin is like a sickness, a loss of substance; the redemption, a restoration to the original fullness of being. Such restoration is brought about not so much by God's justice as by his unfathomable and infinite love. The confidence in His mercy and His *philanthropia*, His love of man, is without limits; penitence and contrition, service rather than works, will secure God's gladly bestowed pardon. The Eastern Christian will not be justified, he will be sanctified, he will become like the angels while still walking this earth; God's mercy will let him experience here a new spiritual birth from which he will emerge closer and ever closer to the divinity itself. Islam, finally, does not recognize in man any fundamental moral deformation; it does not perceive in him any congenital defilement, only weakness and most of all, ignorance. While man is unable to find the right path for himself, Revelation and Sacred Tradition contain the information which he must heed and apply to assure his rescue. Adam is seen to have accepted a covenant with the Lord that establishes the rights of God over man and constitutes disobedience the crucial failing. But God's commands are capable of execution and, while the realization of his ultimate nothingness before his Maker may fill man with fear of his predestined fate, surrender to God and His Prophet and integration into the community of True Believers more than balance his apprehensions; for has not the Lord Himself assured

²⁷ The views suggested in this and the preceding paragraph restate with slight modifications what this writer has proposed in his study "The World of Islam: The Face of the Antagonist" in M. Clagett, G. Post, and R. Reynolds (eds.), *Twelfth-Century Europe and the Foundations of Modern Society* (Madison, Wis., 1961), pp. 189-211, at p. 203. An exposé of the religious significance and function of fear and hope, both included among the "states" (*aḥwāl*) vouchsafed the wanderer on the mystic path in the classical manuals of Sūfism, was given by Ghazzālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, bk. XXXIII, now accessible in the English translation by W. McKane, *Al-Ghazali's Book of Fear and Hope* (Leiden, 1962), who, in his Introduction, attempts to systematize Ghazzālī's views. Note in the text, pp. 6-7, the theologian's statement that "action on account of hope is of a higher order than action on account of fear, because the creatures who are nearest to God are those who love Him most," and love is under the power of hope.

the faithful that no soul will be made to bear more than it is able to bear? Like the Western Christian, the Muslim must give God satisfaction; but unlike him, he faces his Creator unburdened by an inherited rent in his soul and conscious of his membership in the community to which God has confided Truth at its most perfect and its most complete.²⁸

In restoring its place in religion to man's ability to transcend himself in the unitive experience (without change of essence or assimilation to the essence of the deity, as the more cautious of the mystics were careful to explain), mysticism introduced a more joyful mood into Islamic piety, a mood that is perhaps characteristic of all mysticism. It is Martin Luther who has described the fundamental mood of the mystic as *blanda, tranquilla, devota*. The state of the Perfect is joy. Gnosis creates *chara* and *eschate makariotes*.²⁹ And this joy is buttressed by the strengthened confidence in God's willingness to accept the effort of the believer, to cooperate not only with holiness attained, but with the earnest strivings for self-sanctification. It remains for man to purify his soul, to combat sin and despair, to resist Satan in all his disguises; but in the end he will not have fought in vain. That presumption of victory which is so conspicuously absent in Augustinian Christianity,³⁰ and in the early Muslim ascetics, the *Ṣūfī* shared with the Fathers of the Greek Church.

With sainthood becoming a possibility not infrequently realized, the Greek and the Muslim theologians had to concern themselves with its signs and, so to speak, its technical aspects. How, for instance, is the saint himself and how are his disciples to know that his visions are not mere fancies, *phantasiai*, *auhām*? St. Symeon emphasized the unspeakable joy that accompanied the *optasia*, a symptom of genuineness also accepted in some Sufic circles. More objective was the distinction between imaginative and intellectual illumination, which alone was the result of communion with the divine. For imagination, taking many forms, "serves as bridge for the demons, over which these murderous miscreants cross and recross, commune and mix with the soul and make it a hive for many drones—the abode of barren and passionate thoughts."

²⁸ For the concept of man in Byzantine Christianity, cf., e.g., E. Benz, *Geist und Leben der Ostkirche* (Hamburg, 1957), esp. pp. 21 and 46. In it survives the ancient concept according to which the good is identified with what conforms to nature, *kata physin*, and the bad with what is contrary to it, *para physin*. The Monophysite Isaiah (d. 488) has coined from this usage the expressions *he kataphysis* the good, and *he paraphysis*, the bad, expressions which afford suggestive evidence of the survival of the concept; cf. I. Hausherr, "L'imitation du Christ chez les Byzantins," *Mélanges offerts au R. P. Ferdinand Cavallera* (Toulouse, 1948), pp. 231–259, at pp. 238–239. To St. Symeon the goodness of human nature follows from man's being created in God's image. The mystery of the human condition is in the fact that, despite this essentially unalterable goodness, man is generally and totally subject to sin as a consequence of Adam's fall. Adam's primary failing was *oiesis*, arrogance, an overrating of his capabilities. The essence of sin, however, is to be found neither in any specific commission nor omission. It is rather non-participation in the divine nature of Him Who, as Jesus Christ, has hung for us on the cross. In other words, it is imperfect being rather than an imperfection in the being of man as such. Cf. H. A. Biedermann, *Das Menschenbild bei Symeon dem Jüngeren dem Theologen* (949–1022) (Würzburg, 1949), pp. 23–25; 32–33; 37–38; p. 24, note 4, Biedermann recalls the axiom of Western scholasticism according to which *omne ens in quantum est ens bonum est*.

²⁹ Euagrios Pontikos, *fl.* 363–392.

³⁰ Not so much, however, in Thomaeian Christianity, in which the Aristotelian and Stoic sense of a harmonious relation between nature and truth buttresses a more optimistic view of human possibilities and encourages a wider outreach into the universe by self-confident man.

Therefore "keep your mind empty of colour, image, form, appearance, quality, and quantity."³¹

In words that could have been taken from a Muslim mystic, Niketas Stethatos (wrote 1054), disciple and biographer of St. Symeon, describes the sign, *semeion*, of perfection, *teleiotes*, as the true gnosis of God from which will spring wisdom, insight into the nature of God, and correct action; furthermore, visions unveiling the divine mysteries, the desire for union with Christ, and the vision of the divine light of the glory of God, the *naẓar Allāh* of the Ṣūfī. To overcome the possible limitations of the individual with regard to visionary experience, Hesychasts (the term goes back to Patristic times) or Quietists offered a method of contemplation which was brought to Mount Athos from Mount Sinai by Gregory Sinaita during the reign of Andronikos II (1282–1328). Before him, the monk Nikephoros (ca. 1200), in his book on "Sobriety and the Guarding of the Heart" had already endeavored to set forth "the science of the heavenly life, or rather a method, to reach without labor, *akopos*, and without sweat, *anidroti*, the haven of passionlessness, *apatheia*."³² It is difficult not to take this program as a tacit contradiction of St. Symeon's saying which stands in the old tradition of identifying the ascetic life with effort, labor, pain, and combat.³³ "Inasmuch as God wishes to be known by us, so He reveals Himself [incidentally, a recurrent motif of Muslim mysticism], and inasmuch as He reveals Himself so is He seen and known by those who are

³¹ Kallistos and Ignatios, *Directions to Hesychasts*, nos. 64 and 73, in *Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart*, trans. by E. Kadloubovsky and G. E. H. Palmer (London, 1951), pp. 234 and 239; cf. Najm al-Dīn Kubrā's (d. 1221) analysis of visual and auditive experience in F. Meier, *Die Fawā'id al-ḡamāl wa-fawā'id al-ḡalāl des Naẓm ad-Dīn al-Kubrā* (Wiesbaden, 1957), pp. 241–243.

Greek orthodox theology considers the grace of the *noera proseuche* accessible to all who take upon themselves the necessary ascetic preparation. The differentiation between the individuals lies in the measure of the gifts of grace which God accords. Consequently, one may say, a psycho-physical technique as a means (but not more) becomes almost indispensable. Cf. G. Wunderle, *Zur Psychologie des hesychastischen Gebets*, 2nd ed. (Würzburg, 1949), pp. 13–14; 20–30 (detailed presentation of the bodily techniques and their psycho-physical basis). Cf. also pp. 63 and 66, the emphasis on the fact that everybody has both the possibility and the duty to develop his mystical experience. For the integration of breathing exercise and religious experience, cf. John Klimakos (d. ca. 670–680), *Scala paradisi*, gradus 27: "Let the remembrance of Jesus be united with your breathing; then you will realise the fruit of *hesychia*" (quoted by Wunderle, *op. cit.*, p. 22, from MPG, LXXXVIII, 1112 C).

³² Trans. *Writings from the Philokalia*, p. 22. The literal translation of Hesychasts as Quietists should not be understood as equating the passivity of Western Quietism with the Hesychastic attitude in which the ascetic is considered as laboring actively in the *noera proseuche*, the *geistige Gebet*, toward readying himself for the experience of "divinizing" grace; cf. Wunderle, *op. cit.*, p. 31. The contrast is made very clear by the formulation of I. Hausherr, "L'imitation . . .," p. 273: "La grâce diffère la réalisation de la similitude parfaite [after the first assimilation to the divine *apeikonisma* has been granted through baptism], parce qu'elle veut l'opérer avec nous. La spiritualité grecque n'a rien de commun avec le quiétisme. Elle ignore la notion protestante d'un salut par la foi sans les oeuvres. La nécessité de la collaboration humaine s'affirme partout. . . ." Nikolaos Kabasilas, MPG, CL, 720D–721D, clearly distinguishes man's contribution to the attainment of the supernatural life from God's contribution (τὰ μὲν παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ / τὰ δὲ παρ' ἡμῶν), even as the Muslim mystics distinguish the "states," *aḥwāl*, descending into the heart from God, from the "stations," *maqāmāt*, that are reached by the exertion of the seekers; cf., e.g., Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-maḥjūb*, trans. by R. A. Nicholson (Leiden-London, 1911), pp. 180–183. The "sobriety" of the Hesychastic writers is the state of the soul when it has been purified and "simplified"—one is reminded of the Plotinian *haplosis*—and thus opened to the "intoxicating" enthusiasm of grace. The metaphor goes back to (and beyond) Philo's *nephalios methe*, *sobria ebrietas*, and to the New Testament as well; cf. I Thess. 5:6–7: γρηγορῶμεν καὶ νηφώμεν . . . καὶ οἱ μεθύσκοι μενοινῶντες. For "secular" use, cf. Psellos, *Chronographia*, VI, 40: ὁ σαφρόνως ἐνδουσιάζων νοῦς.

³³ Cf. I Hausherr, "Opus Dei," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, XII (1947), pp. 195–216, at p. 206.

worthy. But no one can be worthy of this experience until he unites with the Holy Spirit, having previously acquired by labor and sweat a heart that is pure, simple, and contrite."³⁴ In a manner reminiscent of Nikephoros, St. Gregory Palamas (d. 1359) was to explain that the *operatio Spiritus sancti, energiea tou Pneumatos*, is obtained by the "scientific and incessant invocation of the Lord Jesus"—where the designation of the method as "scientific" deserves to be emphasized.

The individualistic method of the Hesychasts to attain the *ḥāl*, the unitive state, which was to develop into the idiorhythmic ("living by one's own rhythm"), as contrasted with the coenobitic ("based on community living") form of monasticism toward the end of the fourteenth century, was preceded in time by the more collectivistic method, *ṭarīqa*, of the Ṣūfī orders, also called *ṭarīqāt*, that began to consolidate in the eleventh century. The techniques developed by these orders—differing from those of the Hesychasts by the absence of the latter's characteristic omphaloscopy—very nearly guaranteed the mystic at least a partial progress toward his goal. The technique stresses the *dhikr*, the incessant remembrance of God through the pronunciation of His name, corresponding to the Hesychastic *mneme Iesou*. The *dhikr*, like the *mneme*, is accompanied by certain bodily movements or postures and controlled breathing.³⁵ Its development from a preparatory method, a psycho-physical

³⁴ *Precepts*, no. 159 in *Writings from the Philokalia*, p. 135. St. Symeon concludes from God's will to communicate Himself to man that the beatific vision of God may be attained even in this life; see Biedermann, *op. cit.*, p. 94. While man must cooperate in the *Gnadenwirkung Gottes*, the attainment of the beatific vision is an effect of grace and only of grace; for references, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 58, 72, 89ff., and 94–95. The beatific vision "divinizes" man; St. Symeon has said: "Man I am by nature; god, by grace;" *ibid.*, p. 116. Not much later, Saint Bernard (1090–1153) was to speak of the *deificatio* resulting from the blessedness of internal communion; cf. J. Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia, 1962), p. 303. Throughout Islam and Christendom the rise of mystical longing entails a certain reserve toward intellectualism and scientific effort to which intuition and approach to the object through love are preferred. Saint Peter Damianus (d. 1072) speaks of the *sancta simplicitas*, that detachment from cognitive knowledge which allows one to use it without becoming its slave; cf. J. Leclercq, F. Vandenbroucke and L. Bouyer, *La spiritualité du moyen âge* (Paris, 1961), p. 145. The saying of 'Abdallaṭīf al-Baghdādī (d. 1231), renowned as physician, scientist, and traveller, that God never yet selected an ignorant saint or a foolish prophet, is understandable only when seen as protest against a powerful trend of his times. (The passage is included, from the unpublished manuscript of 'Abdallaṭīf's *Metaphysics*, in F. Rosenthal, *Texte zum Fortleben der Antike im Islam*, chap. 18 [soon to appear in the *Bibliothek des Morgenlandes*, Zurich].) The fear of intellectualism and "secular" science never did completely die down in Christianity, either Latin or Greek, from Tertullian's (d. ca. 220) fight against *curiositas* (for the context of which, cf. now J.-P. Brisson, *Autonomisme et christianisme dans l'Afrique romaine de Septime Sévère à l'invasion vandale* [Paris, 1958], pp. 361 and 362–363) to Saint Gregory Palamas' *Hyper ton hieros hesychazonton* (written from 1338 to 1341), ed. by J. Meyendorff, *Grégoire Palamas: Défense des saints hésychastes* (Louvain, 1959), esp. Triad I, *Quaestio* 1 (with Reply), vol. I, pp. 4–69 (text and translation)—to suggest examples from East and West.

³⁵ Cf. Meier, *op. cit.*, pp. 202–205. To Diadochos of Photike (fifth century) the incessant *mneme Theou* is already a guarantee of Jesus' presence; cf. M. Viller and K. Rahner, *Ascese und Mystik in der Väterzeit* (Freiburg i.B., 1939) pp. 192 and 226 (quoted by Wunderle, *op. cit.*, p. 23, note 1). Wunderle, *op. cit.*, p. 47, speaks of the "Verlebendigung der Gegenwart Gottes" which the *mneme Theou* is to bring about. Care must be taken not to attribute the same meaning to what outwardly appears to be the same action. Thus, e.g., the Ibādiyya practiced well into the eleventh century the endless recitation of Koranic texts and of pious formulae in their "circles" (*ḥalqa*) without, however, using these *exercitia* as a preparation for mystical experiences; cf. R. Rubinacci, "Un antico documento di vita cenobitica musulmana," Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli, *Annali*, N.S., X (1961), pp. 37–78, at p. 52. The time was not yet when, to quote Gibbon's somewhat unsympathetic description, "the lord of nations submitted to fast, and pray, and turn round in endless rotation with the fanatics, who mistook the giddiness of the head for the illumination of the spirit." (*The History of the Decline*

reading of the soul for the divine mercy, to a procedure that carries its effectiveness in itself, is symptomatic of the vulgarization of the mystical movement between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries.³⁶

The old idea of continuous prayer is re-expounded almost simultaneously by Niketas Stethatos and Ghazzālī and implemented in the *monologia* of the name Jesus and the ecstasy inducing *dhikr Allāh*. "Remembrance of God or mental prayer," says Gregory Sinaita, "is higher than all other works; as the love of God, it stands at the head of all virtues."³⁷ "Mechanics" of spiritual progress are established. "Thirst and vigil render the heart contrite and a contrite heart produces tears."³⁸ And "nothing pleases God more than sufferings or bodily privations for His sake; and nothing attracts His loving kindness more than tears."³⁹ By this kind of self-control and concentration away from the external world, that purity may be attained "which alone assures the faithful of the great step that makes us pass from understanding after the measure of man to understanding after the measure of God."⁴⁰

In judging the popularity of *dhikr* practice in Islam the absence of sacraments from Muslim doctrine must be remembered. The sacrament provides a regularized means of lessening the distance between divinity and believer without impairing the categorical distinction of their essences. In the words of Nikolaos

and *Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. by J. B. Bury [London-New York, 1896ff.], VII, p. 140, with reference to Murād II [1421-1451].)

³⁶ Cf. the study by L. Gardet, "Mystique naturelle et mystique surnaturelle en Islam," *Recherches de science religieuse*, XXXVII (1950), pp. 321-365, esp. at pp. 322-323 and 350-363. The practice of the uninterrupted *mneme Iesou* enters the Russian Church in the early twelfth century; reportedly the first monk to carry out this method of devotion was Nikola-Svyatosha (born as Prince Svyatoslav Davidovič of Chernigov), who lived in holy orders from 1106 to his death in 1142/43. Cf. I. Smolitsch, *Russisches Mönchtum. Entstehung, Entwicklung und Wesen*. 988-1917 (Würzburg, 1953), p. 65. It deserves notice that both in Islam and in Latin Christendom the eleventh, and especially the twelfth, century witnessed the rise of religious confraternities; for the Christian developments, cf., e.g., G. Le Bras, "Les confréries chrétiennes. Problèmes et propositions," *Revue historique de droit français et étranger*, XXXIX-XL (1940-1941), pp. 310-363, esp. at p. 317. Rubinacci, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-45, presents an investigation of the growth of *koinobia* in Islam from the end of the eighth through the fourteenth century, and points, p. 39, to the similarities between the typology of asceticism in Christianity and Islam (with refs.).

The growing frequency, in the three communities, but especially in Islam and in Latin Christianity, of ecstatic experiences, visions, and (in the West) private revelations as in Rhenanic mysticism of the fourteenth century, stimulates everywhere a certain separation between the theologian as the specialist of an independent science and the *spiritualis* who cultivates his experience without regard to dogmatics; cf., e.g., *Spiritualité*, pp. 425, 446, and 473-474. Similar experiences give prominence to similar theological problems. The *visio Dei* as a direct and immediate perception exercises Latin mystics as it did Hesychasts and Šūfis. In 1336, Benedict XII, a contemporary of Barlaam and Palamas, finds it necessary to support the "moderates" in a special *constitutio*; cf. *Spiritualité*, p. 481.

³⁷ *Instructions to Hesychasts*, no. 7, in *Writings from the Philokalia*, p. 80; a summary of Hesychastic technique by Kallistos and Ignatios, *Directions*, no. 95, *ibid.*, pp. 265-266. The *locus classicus* for *hesychia* in Saint John Klimakos, MPG, LXXXVIII, 1112C, cf. *supra*, p. 107, note 31 where it is defined as the incessant cult of God and the continuous presence before Him; the remembrance of Jesus, united with the rhythm of the breath, brings the realization of the value of this *hesychia*. John's spiritual pupil, the abbot Hesychios (not Hesychios of Jerusalem!), offers in the seventh century in his *Centuriae* the first systematic development of the "Prayer of Jesus" (which Hesychios was the first to call by this name). In the West, it seems, the Lotharingian Grimlaic (tenth century) brought back into view the problem of the *oratio continua*; cf. *Spiritualité*, pp. 142, 658-659, and 680-684 (for later developments).

³⁸ St. John Klimakos as quoted in *Directions*, no. 32, *ibid.*, p. 205.

³⁹ St. Symeon as quoted in *Directions*, no. 30, *ibid.*, p. 202.

⁴⁰ Tatakis, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

Kabasilas (d. 1371), the sacraments are windows through which the rays of justice enter into the dark room of this world. It is true, however, that the dogmatic regularization of the sacraments, or *mysteria*, as the Greek Church would say, renders them less significant to the religious hero or the religious specialist who will strive for a more immediate, a more "private" path of access to the divinity such as the techniques suggested by the Hesychastic monks.

It is surprising how long Hesychasm managed to stay out of doctrinal controversy. Dogmatic difficulties arose when the monks insisted on the uncreatedness of the light which they claimed to see and participate in during their visions, and which they identified with the light on Mount Tabor in which Christ had been transfigured. This uncreated light is strongly reminiscent of the uncreated Word, the Koran, of the Muslims; both doctrines are examples of "emotional" or experiential theology and both touch, in their own way, on the problem of oneness of the divine essence in relation to its qualities or energies. Consequently, where the Muslim orthodox are accused of *shirk*, of "associating" another deity, the eternal uncreated Word, with Allah, Gregory Palamas and his followers were combatted as Ditheists, believers in two Gods. It is characteristic of the underlying attitudes of Western and Eastern piety that, in Islam, the advocates of the uncreated Koran, and, in the Byzantine Church, the advocates of the uncreated Tabor light carried the day, while in the West the consistent application of the distinction between God's essence and His operation—through His word, for instance—seems to remove the difficulty to the satisfaction of the believers. The rejection by the Greek Church of theological considerations of this kind that were actually proffered by the Western-minded, the *Latinophrones*, in its midst, is, however, symptomatic not only of a different basic religiosity, but of national and cultural tensions between the "Latins" and the "Greeks," whose bitterness made compromise of a predominantly Latin cast unacceptable to the Byzantine masses.

Why then, one may ask, did the release of kindred forces fail in the end to lead to a shared outlook on the universe, a common mentality among Byzantine and Muslim? Why were they not like two pillars holding up the same arch? The causes clearly are many, but, from the point of view of this investigation, what may have mattered most in reversing the psychological convergence was the recrystallization of a firmly circumscribed theological and philosophical (also, literary and artistic) culture which the Byzantines achieved not too long before their political collapse at the hands of the Turks. This synthesis was oriented to the West, that is to say, its principal formulations were evolved in dispute with Western theology through what may well be called an intellectual civil war. Once again recourse was had to antiquity; but the scope of community life had become too narrow for this recourse to become effective on its home-ground. The choice between political survival and spiritual survival as Greek Christians had become a permanent *krisis* absorbing what strength could be spared from the struggle for an independent existence. The break with the Christian tradition and the self-identification with paganism proposed by Gemistos Plethon (d. 1452) is, to me, important mostly as a yardstick of

spiritual uncertainty; granted its boldness and intellectual grandeur, its inappropriateness in terms of a redemptive doctrine for Byzantine Hellenism gives it something of the sound of Nero's fiddling. The Hellenism of Mistra—hostile as it was to the essentials of Byzantine civilization—would serve as the ideology of a cultural and political renewal of peninsular Greece. Its efflorescence was confined to the brief span between a "no more" and a "not yet." It lacked the demographic base and the appeal below the *Bildungsschicht* to stand off the Turks after the emperor in Constantinople had lost control. In retrospect, the true significance of Plethon's teachings lies not in their content, but in the ease with which he offered his postulates, conflicting though they were with what was nearest to his people's heart and what was to hold them together past political extinction.⁴¹ This assertion of human independence, of man's choice of spiritual affiliation, is one of the features of that "Latin" humanism which was to separate Islam and the West for good and all; as long, that is, as the East remained unwilling to restyle and redefine itself more or less disguisedly in the Western image. This attitude was a fitting accompaniment to the enlargement of the physical universe by discovery, geographical and astronomical, and by the determined aspiration toward interpretation and control;⁴² an accompaniment also to the willingness to exchange life in an approximately known world for life in an accurately known one (which, oddly enough, also meant the exchange of total for asymptotic truth), to the change from the dominance of aural to the dominance of ocular sensibility, in short, to the hammering out of a universe of ceaseless growth and change, of ceaseless redefinition of man, society, and God, each and all, as it were, both manipulatable in history and complementary absolutes in essence, with man seeking to overpower God for the benefit of society and to yield to Him for the benefit of his soul. The piety of the East would have been meaningless to the apostles of the incipient modern age even had they been able to comprehend it—not least because of the gifts which the exiles from Constantinople turned Turkish (some of them perhaps exiles also from Byzantine civilization) had brought to the enthusiastic adventurers of the Quattrocento.

⁴¹ The flowering of Hellenism in Mistra, as well as the earlier Hellenic revival in the thirteenth century when Constantinople's control had been crushed by the Latins, is an extremely significant phenomenon for the assessment of the relation between political power and cultural rise. F. Masai, to whom we owe the most recent comprehensive analysis of Pletho and his times, has the great merit of being fully aware of the connections which exist between regional autonomy and regional culture as against the requirements of imperial ideology; cf. *Pléthon et le platonisme de Mistra* (Paris, 1956), e.g., pp. 28–37. After the Turkish conquest it was the Orthodox Church, the successor to the Empire, that continued to provide an identity for the Greek-speaking world until the establishment of the Kingdom of Greece made feasible another "kleingriechisches," antiquity-oriented revival.

⁴² This aspiration did not stop even at Scripture. Honorius of Autun (early twelfth century) had already asserted: *Saepius mos Ecclesiae mutatus legitur, et secundum tempus variavit stylum suum Spiritus sanctus* (quoted by H. de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale*, I [Paris, 1959], 17). And Bernard of Chartres (Chancellor of the famous Cathedral School from 1119–1124) declared *veritas* to be a *filia temporis*; cf. J. Le Goff, *Les intellectuels au moyen âge* (Paris, 1962), p. 19. The words which André Malraux, *La tentation de l'Occident* (Paris, 1926), p. 26, has a Chinese write to his French friend well describe the attitude toward the world into which man grew during the Renaissance. "La création sans cesse renouvelée par l'action d'un monde destiné à l'action, voilà ce qui me semblait alors l'âme de l'Europe, dont la soumission à la volonté de l'homme dominait les formes." Cf. also, p. 95, the reference of the Chinese to the Europeans as "une race soumise à la preuve du geste, et promise par là au plus sanglant destin."